



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The following statement may be attributed in whole or in part to Jack Hershey, President and CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, in regards to the House Subs. Version of HB 49, the FY 2018-19 budget bill.

"On behalf of Ohio's community colleges, we applaud Speaker Rosenberger and House leaders for facing head-on Ohio's current fiscal realities while also keeping an eye on the future by committing to move quickly to increase Ohio's highly skilled workforce. The House-substitute version of HB 49 recognizes that community colleges do not have an affordability problem; rather, the budget provides our colleges with the resources to implement reforms aimed at improving student outcomes to help our students move directly into the thousands of middle-skills jobs currently waiting for them at Ohio employers.

By funding short-term certificate programs tied to in-demand fields, the House recognized the value that these short-term training programs have in providing an immediate boost to Ohio employers who are desperately looking for employees in these fields to grow their businesses. Additionally, they recognized that these programs can provide an entry-point to higher education for many Ohioans who can use their success in obtaining a short-term certificate to help build their confidence to eventually obtaining an associate or bachelor's degree.

We are also grateful that the House has revised a textbook proposal that would have been crippling to our institutions. While our colleges have never disagreed with the goals of the proposal to reduce textbook costs for our students, the original proposal merely would have shifted who pays rather than allowing each college to look at the true cost drivers of textbooks - including what role the publishers, book stores, faculty, and institutions should play in developing a plan that reduces textbook costs without sacrificing the quality of our teaching.

The House showed in this budget that they want community colleges to move quickly to help more Ohioans move through our classrooms and laboratories into to the workplace. Ohio's community colleges stand ready to accept their challenge."